THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE MYTHIC SOCIETY

VOLUME LIV

NUMBER THREE

OCTOBER 1963

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Printed by Sri D. S. Krishnachar, at Prabha Printing House, No. 22-A, Nagasandra Road, Basavangudi, Bangalore-4 (India). Edited and Published by G. Nanjundiah, in April 1964 at the Mythic Society, Daly Memorial Hall, Cenotaph Road, Bangalore-2. (India).

OUR CONTRIBUTORS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS

Shri S. K. Jain, Research Officer, Botanical Survey of India, embodies the findings of the ethno-botanical Survey recently conducted by him among the Ādivasis of Bastar District, in his article on 'Magico-Religious Beliefs among the tribals of Bastar, Maḍhya Pradesh.'

Shri K. Guru Dutt, Former-President of the Mythic Society, draws attention to some analogies in ancient Western Thought in the instalment of his contribution on 'Pratibhā' concluded in this issue.

OURSELVES

Delegates to the Seminar on Manuscriptology and Textual criticism held in Bangalore visited the Society on the 8th of November 1963 along with the Director of the Seminar, Dr. Vaidya. They have recorded in the visitor's book as follows:

"We were all impressed by the kind of work it has done in the past and hope that the Society will have days of prosperity in the near.future."

Condolence Meetings

A Condolence meeting was held on 18-3-1964 under the Presidentship of Justice Shri T. N. Mallappa to bemoan the demise of Shri B. Vasudeva Murthy, Retired Justice, High Court of Mysore, and a Life-Member of the Mythic Society. Another meeting to bemoan the loss of Dr. Verrier Elwin and Shri Alur Venkata Rao was held on 28-3-1964 under the Presidentship of Shri R. R. Diwakar, Member Rajya Sabha, President, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi and Sole Trustee, Lokashikshana Trust.

General

Shri U. V. Seetharamiah, a member of the present Managing Committee and Shri M. V. Krishna Murthy, a member of the previous Managing Committee, attended the XXVI International Conference of Orientalists as delegates and read papers respectively on "Growth of Telugu Literature under the Vijayanagara Dynasty" and "Some Aspects of Yoga".

Dr. M. V. Krishna Rao, the President of the Society, Shri T. S. Subrahmanyam, a member of the Managing Committee and Shri G. Aswathanarayana attended the Sangeetha Nataka Nritya Sammelana sponsored by the Mysore State Sangeetha Natak Academy as delegates. Dr. M. V. Krishna Rao delivered a lecture on Purandara Dasa at the Sammelana while Shri A. N. Krishna Rao, a Vice-President of the Society released on 1st January 1964 the Special Souvenir that had been brought out in connection with the Sammelana.

A Notable event that occured after the publication of the last issue of the Quarterly Journal was the election of Dr. M. V. Krishna Rao the President of the Society, as the President of the All-India Vidyarthi Parishat.

We welcome Shri Kaidal Ramaswami the new member of the Society.

THE
QUARTERLY JOURNAL
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MYTHIC SOCIETY

Vol. LIV] OCTOBER 1963 [No. 3

MAGICO-RELIGIOUS BELIEFS ABOUT PLANTS AMONG THE TRIBALS OF BASTAR, MADHYA-PRADESH.

S. K. Jain

INTRODUCTION

Belief in supernatural powers, in some form or other, is shared even by the most civilised people on earth. Propitiation of these supernatural powers is done by some in elaborate public ceremonies, by others through some simple and private rites. The Ādivasis living in forest areas believe in supernatural powers of various animate and inanimate objects. Ādivasis have an intimate relationship with the plant wealth around them. Their material culture almost entirely depend not only on the forest products of their vicinity, but they have deep faith in supernatural powers of certain plants. These plants are, therefore, associated with festive and auspicious days, riddance from disease, safeguards against animals and evil spirits, and weather and crop conditions.

The Ādivasis of Bastar associate supernatural powers or spirits (good and bad) with all activities of life such as birth, disease, death, marriage, agriculture, hunting, house-building and even physical phenomena like earth, water and fire. For this reason, their rituals and festivals centre round innovation of Gods for good crops, successful hunting season, suitable rainfall, prevention of disease, etc. They firmly believe in magical powers

of sacrifice offerings, oracles (*Mantras*), ordeals, taboos, charms and witchcraft.

Grigson (1949) has described the numerous ceremonies called 'Pandum' connected with inauguration of agricultural operations, harvests, onset of fruiting on trees and felling of forest trees, etc. among the Maria Gonds of Bastar. He has also described preferences of these tribals for certain timbers for making their 'Gods' and shrines. Elwin (1950) has described the trees preferred or avoided by these Ādivasis in committing suicide by hanging.

OBSERVATIONS

The present paper describes some magico-religious beliefs about plants noted among the Ādivasis of the Bastar District in Madhya Pradesh. These observations were recorded during my recent (1961–1963) ethnobotanical fieldwork among these Ādivasis. The main subject of enquiry during this fieldwork was the plants used by the Ādivasis as food and medicine. It was chiefly during their narration of diseases and their cures that most of the notes given below were recorded.

Plants which were administered (singly or in mixture) internally, or applied as a plaster on body, or inhaled, were included in medicinal plants. Though, sometimes peculiar curative properties attributed to some plants gave doubts about their efficacy, yet, pending pharmacological tests they have been included as medicinal herbs (Jain, 1963 a). But, I hesitated to include those plants as medicinal herbs which were believed to cure diseases by their touch or mere presence near the patient, *i.e.* by suparficial contact. These were separated as magical cures of diseases.

Though witchcraft and sorcery are said to exist in Bastar, not many plants were reported to be associated with it. Sharp needles made of bamboos were reported to be used for piercing the body of an enemy for taking his blood for sorcery.

With regard to wild edible plants, much of the belief centred round proper inauguration of their fruiting season. It is a taboo

to consume certain fruits before their inauguration ceremonies (Jain, 1963 b). The consequences of violating these taboos can be disastrous. The author was charged with one such violation in a village in Abujhmar, (see notes under *Dillenia pentagyna*).

Ādivasis perform certain rituals to forecast weather and crop conditions and an interesting ritual for forecast of rain was once witnessed in the village Daler near Bhairamgarh. The village priest employed some flowers and a few *Mantras* and confidently declared the time and intensity of rain that year, (see *Madhuca indica*).

Certain plants were observed to be associated with worship and offerings, others were considered auspicious and were preferred for use on days of religious ceremonies or for fixing on shrines.

Rituals and beliefs are sometimes placed in categories like religious beliefs and practices, magical beliefs and practices, charms, witchcraft, rituals connected with personal life, with physical phenomena and with social structure, etc. The distinction between religious faith in certain plants and belief in magical powers of certain other plants is not always marked, and this total behaviour can be called the magico-religious belief. Secondly, some plants are believed to possess more than one magico-religious property. This will require description of such species under more than one category, thereby involving repetition.

Classification into different categories has, therefore, not been done in the primary treatment of plant species and they are arranged alphabetically by botanical names. A tentative categorisation has, however, been done towards the end of the paper.

The latest available botanical names have been adopted. For convenience of reference with older literature, few well-known synonyms (rejected names) are mentioned. The family and habit of the plant are given. Detailed descriptions and uses of these plants are available in floras and books on economic plants. As no detailed botanical account is available for Bastar or the

State of Madhya Pradesh, a reference has been made to the '*Botany of Bihar and Orissa*' by Haines (reprinted edition, 1961); for plants not given in Haines' Flora reference is made to the '*Flora of the Presidency of Madras*' by Gamble (reprinted edition, 1957). Reference has also been made to 'Wealth of India' and some other recent works on economic plants.

The local names of plants are then given, along with, in parenthesis, the language or place for that local name. The local names are given in Roman script. Sanskrit names of plants, wherever available, are also given.

A brief account of the rituals or beliefs about the plants follows it. The locality where that information was obtained is indicated. In describing the magical powers of the plants, the phrase 'the Ādivasis believe that......' has generally been omitted. Since the whole paper deals with magico-religious *beliefs*, it was unnecessary to repeat this explanation every time.

The following abbreviations are used:

G: Gondi language
H: Halbi language
Hi: Hindi language
M: Mari language
S: Sanskrit language
T: Telugu language

ACHYRANTHES ASPERA Linn. Amaranthaceae. A shrub.

Haines, 805; Wlth Ind. Vol. 1: p. 24.

Agya (H); Apamarg (S); Circira (Hi); Korroci (M); Latjira (Hi).

If the roots of this plant are kept for few seconds in the hairdo of pregnant woman at the time of delivery, it facilitates child birth. It should be quickly removed from the head after delivery, else, its effects would be violent and the womb and even the intestines may come out. Locality: Jagdalpur.

AGERATUM CONYZOIDES Linn. Compositae. A shrub.

Haines, 485; Wlth Ind. Vol. 1: p. 40.

Gandrabuta, Sahdevi (H).

A few flowers of the plant are pounded with saffron and made into a paste. This is applied on forehead (as *Tilak*) just before meeting somebody on an important mission. Success is sure. Locality: Jagdalpur.

ASPARAGUS RACEMOSUS Willd. var. **JAVANICUS** Baker.

Liliaceae. A prickly climbing shrub.

Haines, 1137; Wlth Ind. Vol. 1: p. 132.

Cedavar, Khedavar (M); Devbadni, Murmute (G); Moslam-matige (T); Satavari (Hi); Shatamuli (S).

Grigson (*loc. cit.*) mentions that branches of this creeper are fixed on roof of God's shrine on Hareli festival.

BAUHINIA VAHLI Wight and Arnott. Caesalpiniaceae. A robust climber.

Haines, 324; Wlth Ind. Vol. 1; p. 161.

Koya; Maljan (Hi); Paur, Paurtoda (M); Siali, Siadi (H).

This is the most common and useful climber of Bastar forests and a variety of domestic articles are made from it. The sacred thread '*Pavornonde*' is made from its fibre. Locality: Konge.

Grigson mentions that a spot in the forest where this particular climber forms dense growth is considered by the Hill Marias as suitable for sexual intercourse.

BLEPHARISPERMUM SUBSESSILE DC. Compositae. A herb.

Gamble, 487.

Batvali (G); Nallipodla (Hurrepal); Rasnajadi (Ader).

The twigs of this plant are put in houses on festival days (*Navkhana*); it is considered auspicious. Locality: Hurrepal.

BUCHANANIA LANZAN Spr. syn. *B. latifolia* Roxb. Anacardiaceae. A tree.

Haines, 229; Wlth Ind. Vol. 1; p. 233.

Car (H); Cironji (Hi); Erka (Mokhpal); Morlicettu (T); Piyalaka (S); Reka (M).

In Ader village, it is a taboo to cook the fruits of this tree until the Kaksadh festival has been celebrated (it falls sometime in early April). Till then, only raw fruits can be eaten. Locality : Ader.

CASSIA FISTULA Linn. Caesalpiniaceae. A tree.

Haines, 315; Wlth Ind. Vol. 2: p. 97.

Amaltas (Hi); Dhodri (M); Rela (Mokhpal), Sonarli (H); Suvarnaka (S).

Leaves of this plant are heaped and set on fire. Dog, bitten by snake, is held, with its head down, over the smoke of the leaves. The effect of poison goes away. Locality: Nelasnar.

Grigson mentions that leafy spray of this plant is used in exorcism (*Jharna Phunkna* method of treatment of disease).

CLERODENDRUM VISCOSUM Vent. syn. *C. infortunatum* auct. non Linn. Verbenaceae. A shrub.

Haines, 756; Wlth Ind. Vol. 2: p. 232.

Barhicuda (S); Bhant (Hi).

The flowers of this plant are used in worship. Locality: Arandval.

COCHLOSPERMUM RELIGIOSUM (Linn.) Alston. syn. *C. gossypium* DC. Bixaceae. A tree.

Haines, 35; Wlth Ind. Vol. 2: p. 261.

Gong (G); Gongal (Hi); Harsingar (Nelasnar), Kanyari. (Jagdalpur)

The flowers of the tree are used in worship. Locality: Geedam.

CRATEVA NURVALA Buch.-Ham. syn. *C. religiosa* Hook. f. & Th. Capparidaceae. A tree.

Haines, 31; Wlth Ind. Vol. 2: p. 366.

Barna (Hi); Varun (H); Varuna (S).

The tree is worshipped in the village Arandval. A small tree was growing in the midst of the huts of the village. Ādivasis had protected it with a fence, (photo figure 3). Several small

saplings had sprouted around the main tree. My request for a small twig from the tree (for making a herbarium specimen) was vehemently opposed and rejected. The tree, and the soil where it stood, were too sacred to be touched by me, a 'foreigner'. Ādivasis of this village said that the tree never bears flowers and fruits. This statement seems to be associated with their belief that the bark of this tree given to a woman acts as contraceptive (makes the woman sterile, as the tree is).

The tree bore only few young leaves. The shape of the leaves is characteristic and led to the identity of the tree.

After considerable persuasion and negotiation by the Forest Officer accompanying me, a small sapling of the plant was procured. I was told later on that the Forest Officer assured the Ādivasis that the visitor was greately impressed with the religious sanctity of the plant and wanted to carry it for worship. The sapling has established very well in the experimental gardens of the Botanical Survey of India at Allahabad.

CURCUMA ANGUSTIFOLIA Roxb. Scitamineae. A herb.

Haines, 1182; Wlth Ind. Vol. 2: p. 401.

Batri (H); Besegadda (G); Tikhur (H, Hi).

The tubers of this plant are included among the sacred foods and are prescribed for days of fasting. The tubers are pounded and thoroughly washed. They are soaked in water and left for some time, the sweet edible content settles down. Locality: All over Bastar.

DALBERGIA LATIFOLIA Roxb. Papilionaceae. A tree.

Haines, 307: Wlth Ind. Vol. 3: p. 4.

Devbija (H); Shishapa (S).

The wood of this tree is used for making tribal 'Gods' (*Dev*). The tree derives its local name from this association. Locality: Kodoli.

DESMODIUM PULCHELLUM Benth. Papilionaceae. A shrub.

Haines, 273; Wlth Ind. Vol. 3: p. 43.

Dhekna (H); Lodrom (S); Nadak (M).

If the plants of this shrub are kept in the hut *on a Sunday*, the bed-bugs disappear from the hut. Locality: Chhotedongar.

DILLENIA PENTAGYNA Roxb. Dilleniaceae. A tree.

Haines, 7; Wlth Ind. Vol. 3; p. 65.

Karmatta (G); Mici (M); Rauli (Hi).

The fruits of this tree can not be brought into the boundaries of the village Ader until a proper propitiation ceremony of the fruiting season of this tree has been performed before the village '*Dev*'.

Having no notion of such a taboo I collected some fruits of this tree during our trek from Orchha to Ader (14th April 1962). These collections, along with other gatherings of the day, were kept in our vasculum[1], and were, thus, with me in the Ader Ghotul[2] on the night of the 14th of April 1962.

A cattle lifter is reported to have chased some cattle of the village on the night of 14/15th April 1962. On the 15th morning two members of my party fell ill, one with considerably high temperature. The latter, a local forest guide, slipped from the camp (while I was away on fieldwork) and went to the village priest. On my return, the following was narrated by this guide.

"Some people of the village requested the Siraha[3] in the morning to tell why a wild animal was scaring their cattle. The Siraha and the villagers went out to a rather secluded spot away from habitation. I followed them. The Siraha went into trance, I also asked the Siraha why I got fever and requested him to cure me. The Siraha told: these mishaps had occurred because 'Mici' (*Dillenia*) fruits have been brought into the Ghotul. I said 'No, I don't know'.

1. Box for collecting plant specimens. 2. Guest-hut. 3. Exorcist.

The Siraha said 'Yes, they are there',
I said 'No, our Saheb only is staying there'.
Siraha said 'I don't know, but Mici fruits are there'."

The forest guide, our porters, as well as some young boys of this village playing in the forest *might* have seen us collecting *Dillenia* specimens; should this have any relation with the 'prophecy' of the Siraha!

DIOSPYROS MELANOXYLON Roxb. Ebenaceae. A tree.

Haines, 545. Wlth Ind. Vol. 3: p. 81.

Dirghapatraka (S); Tendu (Hi), Tumirmara (M).

The tree is considered sacred. Grigson (*loc. cit.*) records that small pieces of its wood represent idols of God in southern parts of the district, and its branches are put on shrines and on festival days in agricultural fields. Elwin (*loc. cit.*) recorded that the poles of this tree are placed on four corners of the pyres of snakes.

EMBLICA OFFICINALIS Gaertn. syn. *Phyllanthus emblica* Linn. Euphorbiaceae. A tree.

Haines, 132; Wlth Ind. Vol. 3; p. 168.

Adiphala (S); Aonla (Hi); Isurkaya (G); Nelmarra (M); Nilli (Ader).

When cattle suffer from dropsy, and their bodies swell up, a few twigs of this tree are passed over the body from head to tail. Some *Mantras* are also uttered. The cattle urinate and feel relieved. Locality: Jagdalpur.

EUPHORBIA ELEGANS Spreng. Euphorbiaceae. A herb.

Gamble, 891.

Daiyapjada (T), Mukeljaba, Phalodi (M).

When children are affected by some evil spirits, they are given steam bath of this plant, they are cured. Locality: Elmidi.

HEMIDESMUS INDICUS (L.) Schult. Asclepiadaceae. A creeper. Haines, 575; Wlth Ind. Vol. 5: p. 33.

Ananta (S); Arjata (H); Dandarlaha (H); Matiatonda (G); Sugandhijad (Kodoli); Sugandhipala (Nelasnar).

Pieces of its root are strung in a thread and worn as necklace to cure fever. Locality: Keskal, Mokhpal.

When some person is affected by evil spirits, he develops pain in stomach. He chews some roots, swallows the juice and spits out the rest, he is cured.

The two local names of the plant Arjata in Halbi and Matiatonda in Gondi are associated with the words Arjata and Matia, which are the names of this evil spirit. Locality: Kodoli.

HETEROPHRAGMA QUADRILOCULARE (Roxb.) K. Schum. syn. *H. roxburghii* A.DC. Bignoniaceae. A tree.

Gamble, 701; Wlth Ind. Vol. 5: p. 42.

Ududlamaram (Kodoli).

Snakes would not come near this tree as long as it is in leaf. Locality: Kodoli. (See also *Stereospermum*).

MADHUCA INDICA J. F. Gmel. syn. *M.latifolia* Macbr., *Bassia latifolia* Roxb. [Recently it has been suggested that this species be merged with *Madhuca longifolia* Macbride and be named as *M. longifolia* (Koenig) Macbr. var. *latifola* (Roxb.) Cheval.] Sapotaceae. A tree.

Haines, 536; Wlth Ind. Vol. 6: p. 207.

Garamg, Idukmara, Idum (M); Ippa; Madhuka (S); Mahua (Hi); Moda, Troa (H).

The flowers of this tree are used in a magical performance for forecasting weather and crop conditions. A Gaita (priest) performing this ceremony was personally observed on the 21st of April 1962 at the village Daler near Bhairamgarh. My diary for this day records:

PLATE I

Photo Figure 1.

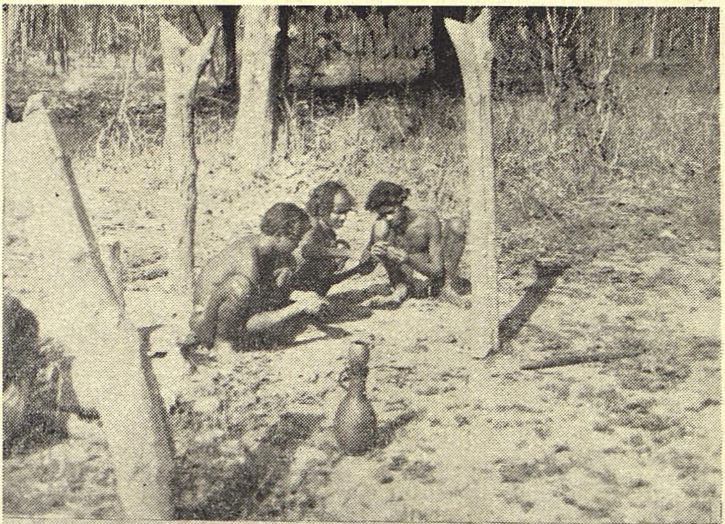
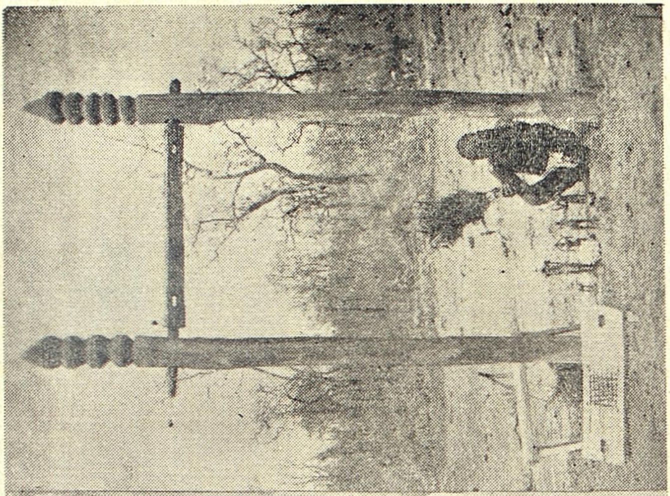


Photo Figure 2.

PLATE II

Photo Figure 3.



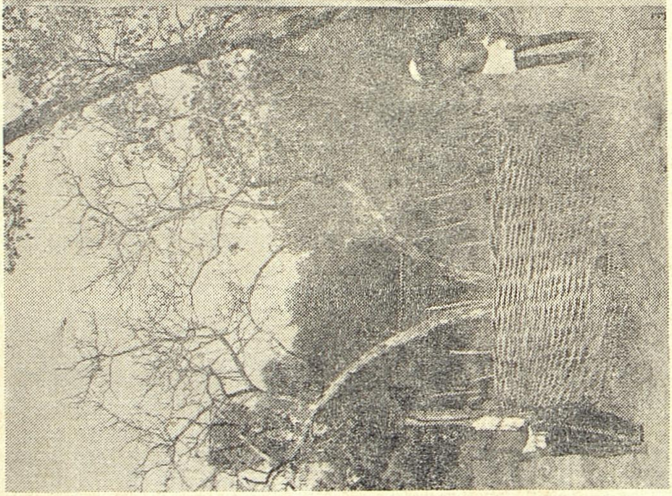


Photo Figure 4.

"Daler is a Muria village, there are nine houses. The name of village Patel is Tupa. There is a hut called Raud, it is the village shrine. It has 6 poles of teak (*Tectona grandis* Linn. f.) and Saja (*Terminalia alata* Heyne) wood. The beams are made of teak. The frame work of the roof is made of Karra (*Cleistanthus collinus* Benth.) and other miscellaneous wood. The thatching is done by Chind (*Phoenix sylvestris* Roxb.) leaves.

"A cradle hangs from the roof, it is called 'Jhula'. The 'Angadev'[4] is made of Tendu (*Diospyros melanoxylon* Roxb.) wood. The name of this God here is Bedmar. There is a small toy horse[5] (figure 6) made of Tendu wood. The horse is supposed to be the carriage of God. I wanted to take the measurements of this toy but the Gaita did not allow and warned that if I touched it, I would die in my return journey. The Goddess of soil and earth here is called 'Matidev' (soil: *Mati*). She is worshipped for good produce from soil. This Goddess also is present near the Raud shrine and is represented by a pole of wood and 4 stones placed in front of it. This particular Matidev is 'Gamai Matidev' (photo figure 2).

"The ceremony today is to forecast weather and crop conditions during the year and to inaugurate eating of Mahua. The elders of the village have not yet taken wine or flowers of new Mahua crop. Younger boys of the village do violate this. The Gaita (name - Kodi, caste - Kunjam) collected some Mahua flowers and cleaned away all parts inside the fleshy corolla (photo figure 1).

"Meantime, a young boy washed another lot of Mahua flowers and roasted them in an earthen pot. The Gaita took two thin bamboo sticks and pierced 7 flowers in each. These were roasted on fire.

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4. Detailed accounts of 'Angadev' are given by Grigson and Elwin (*loc. cit.*).

5. The figure (No. 6) of wooden horse is based on a free-hand sketch and may not strictly be to proportion. I was not allowed to measure it, and it was drawn rather hurriedly. The ceremony of Mahua flowers was fast proceeding and needed attention.

"The Gaita placed knuckles of his both hands on the ground and pressed them producing cracking sound; he uttered some *Mantra* like 'Agadi—Vacadi—'. He took water in a leaf bowl and put some flowers in it; some flowers were from the roasted lot, others were from the unroasted lot. The unroasted ones settled in the bottom of the bowl, others floated.

"He repeated the act. Again the unroasted ones sank while the roasted ones floated. He read a *Mantra* (oracle) again 'Geda, Gond ya-ee-ee-'. The boy was still roasting the flowers. The Gaita again floated the flowers and read some *Mantras*.

"Now he filled water in two leaf bowls, one was to propitiate the rain, other for success in hunting campaign. He sat silently for a few seconds, then dramatically threw water from both bowls and went and sat inside the shrine in a very contemplative mood.

"I asked the Gaita (through the interpreter) the result of his enquiry. After a few minutes silence he made the forecast.

> 'It will rain well soon after sowing of rice, then rain will stop. There will be less rain during early growth of rice; it will be again good rain at the time of grain-setting in rice. There will be no shortage of rain for the Marhan crops (crops raised in the cut and burnt forest area). And the hunting campaign will be successful.'

"Near the site of this shrine is also a 'Mahugorla', the God of Mahua tree. It is a piece of stone with four wooden poles around it, (figure 5). Two very small baskets full of Mahua are kept here as offering so that the big bamboo baskets and storing cans in the houses may become full of Mahua."

Mahua tree is considered sacred and during festival days such as 'Halchat' (*Halshashtmi*) eatables are prepared from the products of this tree and food is even served on the plates and bowls made of its leaves alone. The twigs of this tree are used as tooth-brush on festival days. A God named 'Chikatras' made of

the Mahua wood was seen at Dantewara; the pole of wood representing the God is changed after every 12 years.

Elwin (*loc. cit.*) reported that Mahua is the commonest tree involved in Maria suicides by hanging. Marias would, as far as possible, cremate or bury their dead under this tree. The smoke of Mahua seedcake is believed to drive away snakes.

MANGIFERA INDICA Linn. Anacardiaceae. A tree.

Haines, 228; Wlth Ind. Vol. 6: p. 265.

Am (Hi); Amra (S); Maka, Makamg, Marka (M).

The mango fruits can not be cooked in Ader village until the Kaksadh festival (about early April). The raw fruit is not a taboo. Locality: Ader.

At Aturbeda, the fruit in any form is a taboo until the ceremony of '*Marka Uksana*' (Mango worship) has been performed before the Goddess Danteshwari in the month of Chaitra (about April). Locality: Aturbeda.

ORYZA SATIVA Linn. Gramineae. A cereal grass.

Haines, 1025; Chopra et. al. 182.

Dhan (H, Hi); Dhanya, Shali (S); Vanjing (M).

At Ghursakal near Bhairamgarh, the rice grains are used to forecast the auspicious time of marriage and also to foretell the future harmonious relations between a man and his wife. A flat shallow pan (*Thali*) is filled with water and six grains of rice are slowly dropped in it. Three rice grains represent the man, three the woman. While settling down in water, if the grains come nearer to each other, it would indicate future harmonious relations between them. The ceremony is called 'Jog-dekhna'.

Buntings made of dry ears of rice are displayed on the doors of the huts as auspicious omen. Locality: Chhotedongar.

PANCRATIUM TRIFLORUM Roxb. syn. *P. verecundum* Hook. f. Amaryllidaceae. A herb.

Haines, 1159.

Kandad (M).

The flowers of this plant are used in worship. Locality: Raoghat.

PLUMBAGO ZEYLANICA Linn. Plumbaginaceae. A shrub.

Haines, 529; Chopra et. al., 197.

Chita, Chitrak (M, S).

Roots of the plant are tied on arm or wrist as a bangle to cure body pain. Locality: Nelasnar.

RICINUS COMMUNIS Linn. Euphorbiaceae. A shrub or small tree.

Haines, 116; Dastur, 181.

Eranda (S); Jaronda (H); Nironda (M).

This plant is considered very effective against evil magic. Grigson mentions that in order to protect a woman during menstruation period from evil spirits, the top of her menstruation hut[6] is covered with seed-bearing twigs of this plant.

SAPINDUS EMARGINATUS Vahl. syn. *S. trifoliatus* Hiern. *pro parte*, non Linn. Sapindaceae. A tree.

Haines, 223; Chopra et. al., 221.

Homi (G, T); Rohan, Phenila (S); Somicettu (T).

If a cow or buffalo is garlanded with pieces of its bark, it will be cured of the wounds caused at the time of laying calf. Locality: Bhopalpatnam.

The bark of the tree is reported to be useful in snake-bite; the specification is that the bark should be taken from that side of the tree trunk which is facing west. Locality: Nelasnar.

SEMECARPUS ANACARDIUM Linn. f. Anacardiaceae. A tree.

Haines, 230; Dastur, 190.

Bhallika (S); Idumaram (G): Jidcettu (Bastanar); Kohka (M).

Leafy twigs of this tree are fixed in shrines and houses during Hareli festival. Locality: Jagdalpur.

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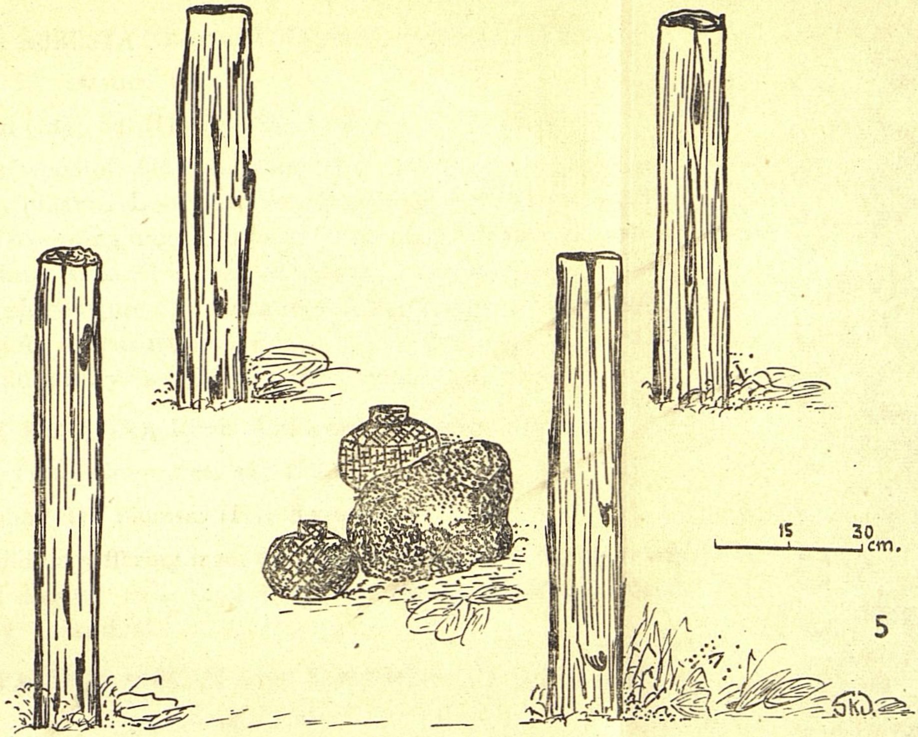
6. Maria women spend their menstruation period in solitary confinement in a small low hut erected at the back of the main living hut.

PLATE III

Figure 5



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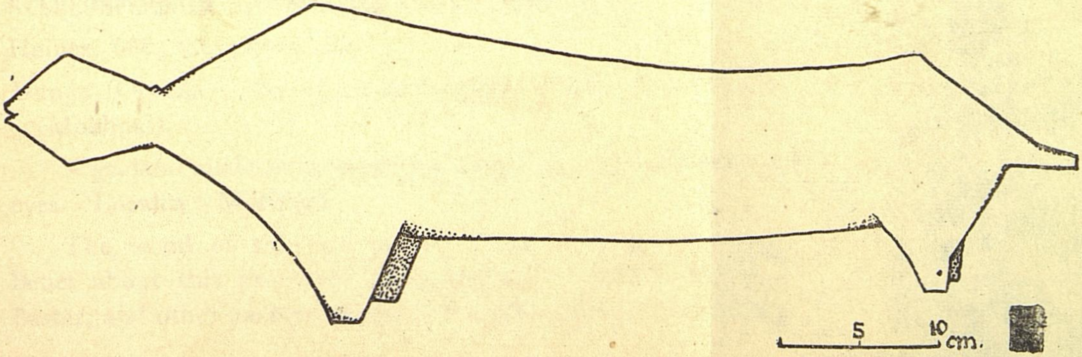

Figure 6

SHOREA ROBUSTA Gaertn. f. Dipterocarpaceae. A tree.

Haines, 58; Dastur, 191.

Haramgi (M); Sal (Hi, S); Sargi (G).

The wood of this tree is used for constructing shrines and funerary pillars. Long poles of this tree are used for making the poles of the swing used in trance. The nailed plank on which the medium is seated is made of 'Sivna' (*Gmelina arborea* Linn.) wood, (photo figure 4). Locality: Ader, Bastar. The choice of this tree for constructional work may be due also to the well-known durability and strength of its wood.

SMILAX PROLIFERA Roxb. Liliaceae. A prickly climber.

Haines, 1136; Chopra et. al., 228.

Mutrilaha (H); Phonsar (H); Ramdatun (H, G).

Children suffering from the disease of wetting at night are cured if they eat their food served on the leaves of this plant. Locality: Arandval.

SPHAERANTHUS INDICUS Linn. Compositae. A spreading herb.

Haines, 496; Chopra et. al., 232.

Bodtalam (T); Lambapul (Geedam); Molelkusir (G); Mundirika (S).

A garland made of the round flower-heads (capitula) of this plant is put round the neck of small-pox patient, he is cured. Locality: Elmidi.

STEREOSPERMUM SUAVEOLENS DC.? Bignoniaceae. A tree.

Haines, 688; Chopra et. al., 234.

Dunga (Orchha); Garud (M); Padhar, Patala (S); Vivum (Mokhpal).

A garland made from its seeds is worn to cure ailments of eyes. Locality: Mokhpal.

The wood of this tree is supposed to keep snakes away. Belief about this property of Garud wood is wide-spread in Bastar, and other parts of Madhya Pradesh. Almost every forest

guide, porter and villager and even many educated people in bigger towns of Bastar spoke of this property of Garud wood. Walking sticks made of this wood are a prized possession of some people (including the District Magistrate). A walk in night or in forest with this cane excludes risk from snakes. Locality: Jagdalpur, Narayanpur, Dantewara.

However, inspite of my repeated requests and positive efforts none could take me to a Garud tree. A portion of dried fruit believed to be of Garud was passed on to me by a Forest Officer; this led to its tentative identification. (See also *Heterophragma*).

TEPHROSIA PURPUREA Pers. Papilionaceae. A shrub.

Haines, 255; Chopra et. al., 241.

Bajradanti (Hi); Citkibuta (H): Kulthi; Sharapunkha (S).

If the twigs of this shrub are used as tooth-brush for six months, snake-bites will not cause poisoning effect. Locality: Nelasnar.

TERMINALIA ALATA Heyne. syn. *T. tomentosa* auct. *pro parte.* Combretaceae. A tree.

Haines, 369; Dastur, 211.

Madmaram (G); Mardi (M); Mardu (Hurrepal); Saja (H, Hi); Saradru (S).

The Gods and various articles associated with Gods and shrines are made of this wood. It is considered very sacred. Locality: Hurrepal.

Grigson and Elwin mention that shrines are made under this tree. Logs of Saja wood are worshipped. While erecting new huts, the first post fixed is of this tree. The funerary pillars are made of this wood. This tree is avoided for suicide by hanging.

XANTHIUM STRUMARIUM Linn. Compositae. A shrub.

Haines, 502; Chopra et. al., 259.

Arishta (S), Gukhru, Kutwa (H); Latakni (Kodoli); Urcing (M).

It is a belief in several parts of Bastar that if ripe prickly fruits are kept in the ear, it cures headache. Locality: Kodoli, Jagdalpur. Also, wearing the fruit in the neck or in arm (opposite to the side of headache) would cure the headache. Locality: Kodoli.

DISCUSSION

The faith or belief of a people in certain things is not open to the test of logic. Still, it needs an explanation why the information described above has been branded as magico-religious belief and not attributed to some scientific truth in it.

A sharp distinction between the so-called medical treatment and magical cure or exorcism is sometimes difficult. An anaemic patient is given bath in the decoction of some leaves, and if a few such baths would make up blood in his body, I (a non-medical man) have chosen to consider it a magical cure. Similarly, if placing root of a certain plant on the head of a woman would relieve her pains of child-birth, it is more a magic than treatment (see *Achyranthes aspera*).

If the twigs of a particular plant are kept inside the hut *on a Sunday* the bed bugs will disappear. This insect-repellant for the bed bugs could have been explained due to some odour or excretion from the plant, but this clause 'on a Sunday' has reduced it to a mere magic. To the best of my knowledge, nothing has been written to show that the physiological activity or chemical reactions of plants are different on different days of the week. Until something is proved to the contrary, it is a mere belief.

A general commonsense, therefore, about medicine, therapy, meteorology and other sciences influencing our lives, as we know them today, is the only explanation. 'As we know them today' I said. What is fiction and fairy-tale today, may be proved a phenomenon tomorrow.

Several categories of rituals and beliefs have been suggested in '*Notes and Querries on Anthropology*' issued by Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain (1951). In the following

paragraphs the plant species associated with different kinds of beliefs are indicated. Some species appear in more than one category.

1. Religious beliefs and practices

Plants which are considered sacred and are associated with religious ceremonies or with sacred objects are included in this category. Also, those edible plants with which religious taboos are associated are included here.

(i) Sacred objects and articles:

Asparagus racemosus, *Bauhinia vahli*, *Blepharispermum subsessile*, *Clerodendrum viscosum*, *Cochlospermum religiosum*, *Crateva nurvala*, *Curcuma angustifolia*, *Dalbergia latifolia*, *Diospyros melanoxylon*, *Madhuca indica*, *Oryza sativa*, *Pancratium triflorum*, *Semecarpus anacardium*, *Shorea robusta* and *Terminalia alata*.

(ii) Food taboos:

Buchanania lanzan, *Dillenia pentagyna*, *Madhuca indica* and *Mangifera indica*.

2. Magical beliefs and practices

Plants which are supposed to cure disease by superficial contact, plants used in exorcism (*Jharna-phunkna* method of treatment) and plants associated with charms or invasion of wild animals are included in this category.

Achyranthes aspera, *Ageratum conyzoides*, *Cassia fistula*, *Crateva nurvala*, *Desmodium pulchellum*, *Dillenia pentagya*, *Emblica officinalis*, *Euphorbia elegans*, *Hemidesmus indicus*, *Heterophragma quadriloculare*, *Madhuca indica*, *Plumbago zeylanica*, *Ricinus communis*, *Sapindus emarginatus*, *Smilax prolifera*, *Sphaeranthus indicus*, *Stereospermum suaveolens*, *Tephrosia purpurea* and *Xanthium strumarium*.

3. Rituals connected with physical phenomena

Mahua (*Madhuca indica*), whose flowers are used in an elaborate ritual for forecast of rain can be included in this category.

4. Rituals connectcd with economic activities

Crops and wild plants which can be eaten only after their propitiation or inauguration ceremonies have been performed can be included here, namely:

Buchanania lanzan, *Dillenia pentagyna*, *Madhuca indica* and *Mangifera indica*.

5. Rituals connected with social structure

Vanjing (*Oryza sativa*, rice), whose grains are used for the '*Jog-dekhna*' ceremony, *i.e.* forecast of mutual relationship between husband and wife can be included here.

The magico-religious beliefs about plants described above are side-gleanings during author's fieldwork on ethnobotany of the Ādivasis of Bastar. It might be of some interest to ethnographers to compare these magico-religious beliefs in plants with those of the Ādivasis of other regions. Many more records of magical powers of plants and other plant-myths in this region could be made by laying grater emphasis on these aspects while interviewing the informants there.

SUMMARY

The Ādivasis of Bastar district in Madhya Pradesh associate certain plants with their Gods, Goddesses, shrines, sacred objects, crop and weather forecasts, food taboos and magical treatment of diseases. Notes on 34 plant species associated with such magico-religious beliefs are given above.

A ceremony for forecasting crop and weather conditions, involving some Mahua (*Madhuca indica* Gmel.) flowers and the village priest armed with his *Mantras*, is described in detail. This ceremony and certain other sacred objects are illustrated by photographs and line drawings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the Director, Botanical Survey of India, for encouragement and facilities during my ethnobotanical

studies. My thanks are due to the Officers of various Government Departments in Bastar District for help during field work.

The Director, Anthropological Survey of India and Director, Tribal Research Institute, Chhindwara, have kindly allowed facilities of reference work in their libraries. Sri B. Mukherjee, of the Anthropological Survey, Calcutta, has kindly gone through the manuscript and made some useful suggestions.

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EXPLANATION OF PLATES

PLATE I

Photo figure 1. (Locality: Daler near Bhairamgarh) The village priest (Gaita) and his two assistants cleaning Mahua flowers. In the foreground is a 'water can' capped by a serving bowl, both made of *Lagenaria siceraria* (Mol.) Standl.

Photo figure 2. (Locality: Daler) The Gaita is sitting before the Goddess of soil 'Gamai Matidev', represented by a pole of wood and four stones. He holds some Mahua flowers in his right hand and utters some *Mantras*. On the extreme left, one of his assistants (partially seen) roasts some Mahua flowers in a broken earthen jar. One inverted earthen jar is seen in foreground by the side of the wooden pole.

PLATE II

Photo figure 3. (Locality: Arandval) A small tree of *Crateva nurvala* with protective fence. The tree is worshipped. Two Gonds stand to protect the tree from the 'greedy' botanist. In the background on the right is a large tree of *Adina cordifolia* (Roxb.) Hook. f. ex Brandis.

Photo figure 4. (Locality: Ader in Abujhmar) The '*Jhulna*' or plank studded with long nails is seen on the

left bottom. It is hung to the horizontal bar between the two long poles and the *medium* (in trance) is seated on it for exorcism. The priest brought out (on my request) the statues from a nearby temple for the picture.

PLATE III

Figure 5. (Locality: Daler) The stone in centre represents 'Mahugorla', the God of Mahua tree. The two small bamboo baskets are full of Mahua flowers and are an offering before the 'God.'

Figure 6. (Locality: Daler) A toy wooden horse considered to be the carriage of God 'Bedmar.' Its length is about 65 cm. and height from ground about 20 cm.

PRATIBHA *

(Some Analogies in Ancient Western Thought)

K. GURU DUTT, I.A.S. (Retd.)

Plato developed both sides of his master's teaching. On the one hand, is his concern for practical reform of the society around him, and for a transvaluation of current moral values. His plea for the banishment of poets is a protest against popular religion, and his anxiety that only philosophers should rule is the expression of disgust with the ignorant Athenian democracy which had condemned Socrates to death. It has even been said that his Theory of Forms or Ideas could be deduced from his moral thesis.

On the other hand, if Socrates' philosophy was pre-occupied with the good life in this world, Plato's was centred on the other world. In this matter, Plato implies that he has gone beyond his master. In the *Symposium*, he makes Diotima say, "into these lesser mysteries of Eros, you, Socrates, may perhaps be initiated; but I know not whether you are capable of the perfect revelation—the goal to which they lead. I will not fail, on my part, to express them as well as I can; you must try to follow, to the best of your power." The final revelation of Beauty itself is described in terms recalling the Eleusinian mysteries, the disclosure of sacred symbols in a blaze of light. It is an immediate intuition in which there is no longer any process of thought. As in the *Republic*, the union of the soul with Beauty is called a marriage—the sacred marriage of the Eleusinia—an experience in which the distinction between the metaphysical and the religious becomes meaningless. For Plato man is a plant which has its roots not in earth but in heaven: an image directly reminiscent of the *Ūrdhvamūlādhaśśākhāśvattha* of the *Upaniṣads* and the *Gītā*.

But the noteworthy thing about Plato's universe is its dualism, with its opposition between reality and appearance, wisdom and opinion, mind and body, the visible and the invisible, this world and the other. Except perhaps for the final culmination, the singleness of vision is no longer there. Plato is essentially a divided

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* Continued from Vol. LIV Page 40.

soul. A highly gifted poet himself, he thinks poetry dangerous and will have none of it. He speaks of his affection for Homer as if he were confessing a sin, and proceeds to denounce him in the interests of what he regards as the truth. In his impassioned defence of "Truth" at the expense of aesthetic beauty, he seems to immolate a cherished part of himself on the altar of philosophy. He ironically "debunks" the old idea of poetic inspiration in his *Ion*. Fully in keeping with his views on aesthetics, Plato is ultra-puritancial in his morals.

In general, it may be said that Plato's disparagement of the life of sense is not in line with the Greek tradition, with its concept of wholeness and its own unique idea of Sophrosyne. The Greeks were healthy minded-maqueors (happy men), free from the moral fervour of the Hebrews based on the notion of sin. It was only after Plato that the distinction between idealism and materialism came into being. It is a mistake to classify the pre-Socratic philosophers on this criterion. Aristotle, although a pupil of Plato, represents a reversion to Greek norm, from which Plato had been a deviation. Aristotle's views on aesthetics as well as morals are not only broader than those of Plato, but also more balanced, being more in accord with the characteristically Greek standards of measure and moderation. In any case, it happened that for over four centuries after Plato it was not Platonism but its antithesis, *Stoicism*, which dominated the civilised world, until it had a rebirth in Christianity. St. Augustine says in an oft-quoted passage that the Incarnation was the only Christian doctrine which he did not find in the Platonists.

Aristotle sums up the knowledge of his time. He was the first of the encyclopaedists. Before him there had been no classification of the different branches of natural science and philosophy. He was their codifier. Although a pupil of Plato, he differed from him in many important respects. While admitting the dual nature of man, the lower and the higher, he did not advocate the elimination of the lower, but pleaded for a harmonious balance between the physical and the psychical. This equilibrium he calls virtue. He does not hold up any impossibly high ideal life, but preaches the excellence of the middle path.

We have already seen the breadth of his views on morals. Although he recognises that some hold pleasure to be bad, he is not among them. He speaks in his *Ethics*, of pleasure as a natural state, and approves the replenishment of it. In his *Poetics*, he does not mention ethics. He is not hostile to myths and concedes that the lover of myths is in his way a philosopher. Above all, he does not envisage any necessary opposition between the artist on the one hand, and the mystic or philosopher on the other. It is significant that the higher principle in the human psyche is called by him Nous Poetikos : the active intellect.

The central concept in his philosophy is Nous, the divine mind, which he makes out to be simultaneously immanent in all things as well as transcendent to the universe. (*cf. Viśvamaya* and *Viśvottīrṇa* of Kashmir Śaivism). For Aristotle, contemplation (Theoretike) is the highest and best activity and nearest to the nature of God.

It is curious that in his old age, the Athenians brought against him also a charge of impiety, and he had to flee to Chalcis where he died in exile. Artistotle's philosophy had a tremendous vogue in the Middle Ages under the auspices of the Church, and St. Thomas Aquinas was his greatest exponent. After that there was a fall in his popularity. The Church banned him, and the University of Paris forbade the teaching of Aristotle in 1313. The Renaissance itself was a prolonged reaction against Aristotle's domination.

It only remains for us to deal with the Stoics briefly. It is recognized that Stoicism is a blend of Eastern and Western thought. They held that deity is immanent in the universe, for which they have been dubbed as pantheists, and for their monism they have been called materialists. They posited a single "Divine Substance" which was also the "Soul of the Universe". It held within itself an active power which Zeno, the founder had called Nous, often rendered as Universal Reason. In its lower or physical aspect it is termed Pneuma and in its higher or psychical aspect it is Logos. With these cosmic notions the Stoics combined an austere ethics based on the Socratic. Some of the greatest figures in the Greco-

Roman civilization were Stoics, among whom was the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius.

In his translation of the *Diary* of Marcus Aurelius, Professor Rendall pays an eloquent tribute to Stoicism: "The Stoic monism... noble, far-reaching, and on its own lines exhaustive, not merely held for centuries a more active and commanding sway over the minds and hearts of men than the metaphysics of Plato and Aristotle, not merely interwove itself with Christian doctrine and discipline, and found reconstruction in Spinoza, but, at this day, alike in the poetic and scientific imagination, enjoys a wider currency, and exercises a more invigorative appeal in the field of natural religion, than any other extra-Christian interpretation of the Universe."

Chapter IV

I

We may summarize the findings of the last three chapters. We saw that Pratibhā was a form of awareness characterised by creative spontaneity, primarily connected with the "world of discourse." Starting with the *Vāk* (Speech) of the Ṛgveda, the primordial power energizing all the gods, it becomes the Word (*Śabda-tattva*) of the Grammarians, standing midway between the unconditioned Brahman and the world of experience. The full metaphysical and religious implications of this conception were developed in Kashmir Śaivism where Pratibhā is the power (*Śakti*) of the Supreme Lord (*Maheśvara*), manifesting and withdrawing the universe. It is the link between the human and the Divine, the Grace (*Anugraha*) which leads to liberation from *Saṁsāra*.

The Hindu *Darśanas* generally, as well as the Jaina and Bauddha, admit the possibility as well as validity of the supersensuous intuition signified by Pratibhā. It acquires a crucial and specialized status in the Yoga where it stands for the penultimate stage of knowledge, different from ordinary verbal apprehension based on observation and inference, and characterized by simultaneity and spontaneity. It is not mere knowledge but also efficacy leading to supernormal attainments (*Siddhis*). It can itself be developed by training (*Sādhanā*). Buddhism

prefers the term *Prajñā*, and later schools like Zen attached great importance to the sudden manifestation of *Prajña* in the immediacy of realization known as Satori. In Tāntrik systems the concept of *Sahaja* come into prominence in the sense of the higher intuition which is the path as well as the goal of the spiritual quest. This concept has coloured much of subsequent Indian thought. Lastly, we saw that in Radhakrishnan's interpretation of Indian philosophy, which is representative of the contemporary enlightened outlook, the identity of aesthetic and spiritual intuition forms the foundation of the structure.

Next, we traced the course of Pratibhā through literature and poetics, where by general consensus, it has been held to be the source of all creative inspiration. It is usually contrasted with learned and authoritative tradition (*Vyutpatti*). In the Vedas, Pratibhā had priority over *Vyutpatti*. In the heyday of classical Sanskrit, Pratibhā and *Vyutpatti* were harmonised as in Kālidāsa. In the later decadence, *Vyutpatti* got the decided whip hand, reserving the field of serious thought for itself, leaving only imaginative literature to Pratibhā. This divorce between *Śāstra* and *Kāvya* was prejudicial to both. In the sphere of poetry, the responsive critic (*Sahṛdaya*) who participated in the *Pratibhā* of the poet (*Kavi*) was given equal status. Together they formed the axis of aesthetics: *Sarasvatyās tattvam kavi-sahṛdayākhyam vijayate*! as Abhinavagupta said. The unique aesthetic experience (*Rasa*) was supersensuous (*Alaukika*) and almost indistinguishable from spiritual realization. This mediator between the aesthetic and mystic modes was the key-note of Indian thought. Its *Vācaka* was *Pratibhā*.

II

Lastly, we saw that the divergent pull of the Eastern and Western temperaments was the cause of the ancient schism between the Vedic Indians and the Avestan Iranians, the former disposed towards naturalistic monism, and the latter towards ethical dualism. The dualistic mode was developed by the Hebrews who were the heirs to Iranian spirituality, just as later

Christianity shared the Jewish legacy. On the other hand, the Greeks were by language and temper closer to the Vedic Indians, and monist in outlook. On our showing, as between Greek and Jew, it was the latter who stood for the real West, and not the reverse, as commonly supposed. Plato's dualism positing a fundamental opposition between the values of this world and those of the other between appearance and reality, and between aesthetic and mystic experience, was on the whole a deviation from the Greek norm. Aristotle in many ways represents a reversion. It has been said that he saved Platonism at the cost of dualism.

Not only was Greek thought monist, but it was also by and large intuitionist. The one almost follows from the other, for the totality of experience cannot obviously be comprehended by "Reason" in the narrower sense, but it is also against the nature of monism to draw a hard fast line between "Reason" and "Intuition." It is this total faculty in which the individual and the cosmic merge, which was designated "Nous", and more specifically "Logos" by the Greeks. Of the two, Logos was perhaps the older word, first used by Heraclitus and then borrowed by the Stoics. Nous seems to have been introduced by Anaxagoras, the Ionian philosopher who migrated to Periclean Athens and whose philosophy was a kind of half-way house between Ionian monism and the Platonic dualism. Plato as well as Aristotle give the concept of Nous a central place in their teaching. This will be examined later while dealing with the later developments.

Apart from specific doctrine, many circumstances suggest that intuition was the dominant trait in the Greek mentality. The close bond between art, poetry and drama with popular mythology and religion on the one hand, and the wide prevalence of the mystery cults: Dionysian, Orphic and Pythagorean on the other, illustrate this. Their ethics was based on aesthetics, and virtue itself was prized because of its supreme beauty. They had no love for logic chopping. For them the discursive reason was not Logos but something quite inferior: Logismos or Dianoia. The Sophists who were addicted to its exclusive use were for Plato,

"Public Enemy No. 1". The Eleatics who were the philosophical ancestors of the Sophists were characterized by Plato and Aristotle as "interruptors of the course of the world", meaning contrary to the very grain of Greek thought.

Philosophy, for the Greeks, was inseparable from discipline and a way of living. The life of a "lover of wisdom" included Praxis (*Śīla*), Noesis (*Dhyāna*) and the supreme experience Logos or Nous (*Prajñā*). Noesis was not different from Theoria or contemplation, which according to Aristotle is the highest form of human activity partaking of the very nature of Deity. As in the Indian *Gurukula*, so in the Platonic Academy, the teaching was oral. Plato held that the spoken word is living and animate, the carrier of intuition, the written only a shadowy imitation, a reminiscence of it. Speaking of the written word which remains permanently fixed, he says: "Its father is no longer there to defend it." The authentic statement of his views is thus to be looked for in his oral teaching rather than in the Dialogues which were of an exoteric character. But the lectures are unknown to us except for some obscure references in Aristotle. It is however noteworthy that while Aristotle uses the *Republic* and the *Laws* as sources of Plato's political, educational and sociological views, he never quotes a Dialogue as authority for the "Theory of Ideas". So, it would be no use going through the Dialogues with a small comb in order to get at Plato's real estimation of Nous. He did not so much speak about it as make his disciples participate in it, in his own inspiration (*Pratibhā*). Even his spoken word did not convey it but were the means of its evocation (*Dhvani*). In the words of Ezra Pound,[64] he caused man after man to be suddenly conscious of the reality of the Nous, of Mind, apart from any individual mind "of the sea crystalline and enduring, of the bright as it were molten glass that envelops, full of light." Such was the quality of the Platonic intuition. It is no use making a fetish of his written word. We may add here that to the Greeks "Enthusiasm" is not to be sharply distinguished from "Ecstasy" as developed by later Platonists and others, meaning god-given experience which

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[64] "Kulchur": Ezra Pound. p, 44.

led to the freeing of man from the limitations of the body and the conferring of powers unknown before. As Dean Inge has said, Nous is the heaven of the Platonists.

We cannot omit mention of the Greek idea of Eudaimonia, which as in India makes out happiness to be the aim of philosophising, not the search for "truth" which could be stated in propositional form. For centuries this ideal seems to have persisted. St. Augustine said, "man has no motive in philosophising save that he may be happy." *Nulla est homini philosophandi causa, nisi ut beatus sit.*" This ultimate happiness, is not pleasure (*Sukha*), but beatitude (*Ānanda*). The notion goes back to folklore and pre-historic antiquity. Literally it means to be possessed of one's good Daemon. Socrates as is well-known claimed at crucial times to be guided by his Daemon. Both Plato and Aristotle use the term Eudaimonia and the latter made it the key term of his ethics. He elucidated its implications and also distinguished it from mere pleasure derived through the senses (Hedone). According to him, if a man is to be called "Eudaimon", he must have the totality of his powers, physical, mental, and spiritual functioning harmoniously. This is more in keeping with the Indian objective of *Puruṣārtha* in which this good in the world (*Iha*) and in the other (*Para*) can be simultaneously achieved, rather than with the Western *idée fixée* that it is impossible to "make the best of both worlds", or to "serve God and Mammon" at once.

Aristotle[65] has often been compared with Plato to his disadvantage. His devotion to logic with all its limitations is obvious. It was he that said, "The syllogism is Logos". No doubt his greater explicitness did involve a loss. But it would be a mistake to call him as has sometimes been done, the first of empiricists. He was an empiricist of sorts at one end, but he was far from holding that the senses are the sole source of knowledge. For him Nous which at one end means in Greek the mere sense of a sentence, means at the other the Absolute Good, the "object of its own thought", the "law of the law-giver" (cf. *Daṇḍo damayatam asmi* of the *Gītā*). Noesis which to start with, means thought or way

[65] Clear cut and systematic *versus* unsystematic and infinitely suggestive.

of thinking, also stands for intuitive participation in the Nous, (Theoria) the life of contemplation which is the highest conceivable good of man.

Finally we may cast a brief glance at the Stoics. Apart from their ethics, their philosophy was the very antithesis of that of Plato's Academy. To them, the Platonic "Universals" were no more than academic abstractions, and "Ideas" were empty concepts, and Aristotle's syllogism only a grammatical form, certainly not Logos. They were monists harking back to Ionia, and are commonly described nowadays as materialists, which would have been unintelligible to Cicero and Plutarch, for the distinction between materialism and idealism has no meaning apart from Plato's dualism. As for Heraclitus, God was for the Stoics the "architectural Fire" (*pur technon*), from which the soul was struck off like a spark—*apospasma*—and lodged in the human heart whence 'voice' proceeded, the Word as a creative force—Logos. The Stoics recognised Nous but merged it in the Logos which they identified with the conscious self in man (*Ātman*) as well as with the Universal Reason (*Brahman*).

III

In order to get at the mentality of any epoch, it is essential to go behind what is actually said to what is unsaid, to the ground-work of tacit assumptions which are taken for granted. This background had therefore to be sketched somewhat elaborately in order to help us to appreciate the significance of two Greek words—Nous and Logos–which as between themselves are the nearest approaches to our own Pratibhā. Exact equivalence cannot be expected. Even in one and the same milieu words constantly keep changing in meaning. We cannot gauge how much the word Logos, for example, might have altered in significance in the two centuries which elapsed between Heraclitus and the Stoics. As for later times, when the term was translated from Greek into Latin, and then into the derived European languages, the deviation from the original sense was accentuated at each remove. Thus no modern word like Reason (v. Intuition) or Spirit (v. Matter) can cover more than a fraction of the content that Logos had either for Heraclitus or Zeno.

Some authorities (*e.g.* Zeller) speak as if the Logos idea had its birth in Greece and as if it is synonymous with the independent human reason seeking to explain reality in a natural way. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Logos places human reason in its total context, and stresses its dependence on the supra-human. Reason in isolation is sheer madness. As Chesterton wrote: "The mad man is the man who has lost everything except his reason." His thought is completely consistent with itself but inconsistent with the context. Logos on the other hand is a metaphysical factor or entity immanent in Cosmos, even when it first dawns in Greek thought in Heraclitus. The old Greek notion of Cosmos itself was something altogether different from ours, for, as has been rightly said, "The sharp distinction between subject and object which pervades modern thought was foreign to Greek philosophy."

Heraclitus identifies the divine harmony interfused in Cosmos with "Primordial Fire" (*Lokādim Agnim*) and true knowledge consists in intuiting this harmony as embodied in the "manifold of perception." This is not by any means an act of the empirical reason, for according to Heraclitus the senses are notoriously "bad witnesses". He complains that men live "as if they had a wisdom of their own" (meaning, by their empirical reason) being ignorant of the Logos. It is thus abundantly clear that he does not lay much store by "independent human thought." For Heraclitus, the Logos is a spiritual (not as opposed to material, but inclusively) principle, and not the secular Reason. Both he and his formidable opponent Parmenides are agreed about the nature of the Logos: it represents the Word (as opposed to words), the unity of thought, being and speech.

The idea of an immanent cosmic factor akin to Logos is an important component of Eastern thought from times more remote than Greek antiquity. Macdonnell has pointed out that the concept of *Ṛta* in the Ṛgveda standing simultaneously for the cosmic as well as moral order and constituting the matrix in which the gods themselves are imbedded is not only etymologically identical with the cognate conceptions of Tao in Chinese thought and Asha in Zoroastrianism, but also closely allied in significance. The eminent Sinologue, the late Rev. James

Legge said that he was convinced that Logos is the nearest Western equivalent for Tao, but hesitated to use it as it would suggest identity with the Logos of the New Testament and raise complications.

It has been said that the Logos doctrine, forming a link between self and not-self, furnishes "a striking parallel between early European and Indian thought." "Knowledge of the self is here one with the knowledge of the Universal Logos; and such knowledge is the basis not only of conduct but of existence itself in its only real sense." Conjoined to this another common hypothesis *viz.* the inseparability of thought and language, which Heraclitus held along with the Vedic seers and the Hebrew prophets. We have already noticed that the *Vāk* of the Vedas, *Brāhmaṇas* and *Upaniṣds*, the *Śabda-tattva* (*Sphoṭa*, *Paśyantī*) of the Grammarians, and the *Pratibhā* of the Śaivas and the Ālaṁkārikas are almost identical in content. The close parallelism between the Vedic and *Vāk* the Creative word or wisdom of the Old Testament and the Greek Logos was pointed out by Max Muller long ago.

In Genesis and some of the Psalms we come across the concept of the Divine Word or Fiat that creates the world. The idea of Divine Wisdom seems to have gradually developed out of this during the Persian period. Wisdom as used in the *locus classicus* (*Prov.* 8), connotes the contents of the Divine Reason, God's consciousness out of which created things emerge. This wisdom is personified. It dwelt with God before creation. It is the companion or sharer of His Throne, by which He made the world and which enters into the world and especially man. It is the effulgence of the eternal light and the outflow of His glory. It is of special interest to note that it is represented as intermediary between God and man, being the 'created creator' at once human and divine and possessing redemptive virtue. It is the Law as well as the Holy Spirit. Personified as a woman, she is to be wooed, but she is also referred to as sister. Solomon's wisdom was the sign of her grace. As declared in *Ecclesiasticus* (iv. 14) "them that love her, the Lord doth love."

IV

The currents of Greek and Jewish thought met at Alexandria. It is said that about the beginning of the Christian Era, there were about a million Jews in Alexandria. The first great Jewish thinker was Philo, a contemporary of the historical Jesus. He had made a thorough study of Greek philosophy, particularly the Stoic. His principal works are commentaries on the Old Testament which he interpreted allegorically, seeking therein the source of the main ideas of Plato and Aristotle. He fused together the Hebrew idea of the Creative Word and the Greek Logos. His philosophy has been described as "a syncretism of Oriental mysticism and pure Greek metaphysics, representing the climax of Jewish philosophy." According to him, there are mediating entities between God and the world, which he calls Logoi. These resemble the Platonic "ideas", but with force or efficacy (*Śakti*) added. Together they are comprised in the Supreme Idea or Energy: Logos which is identified with creative Word of Gnosis, and with wisdom (Sophia).

In Christianity, the richly composite notion of Logos acquired an altogether new significance, which bursts forth in its utter spontaneity in the Fourth Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." This Word or Logos is next identified with life and with light: "The true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him and the world knew him not."

The acceptance of the conception of Logos made a philosophic place for Christ within the Godhead. The doctrinal history of the Church during its formative period is bound up with the role assigned to Logos in the orthodox scheme. The first great crisis came in the second century when the opposition of the Gnostics had to be faced and overcome. The position of the Gnostics was a sort of half-way house between Christianity and Graeco-Persian paganism. The extreme dualism and pessimism of the Gnostics can be seen from the fact that they held that creation itself was evil. They admitted Christ as the Messiah,

but denied that the Logos had actually become flesh. They claimed that they were the bearers of a secret apostolic tradition, and had access to direct inspiration.

In vanishing, Gnosticism left its marks on Christianity directly and indirectly. Originally, dependence on the Spirit for light and guidance had been held to be primary and sufficient. Now the adoption of safeguards was deemed esssential. This led to the formulation of the only authoritative canon, and of dogmas including that of "apostolic succession" according to which bishops alone could transmit the saving grace. Thus the Catholic Church came into being with the sole privilege of interpretation of the scripture. Henceforward there was to be no more immediate access to the living Logos; it had always to be mediated. Mystics and others who laid claim to inspiration were often dealt with as heretics.

We can find a parallel to this in India. Originally *Śruti* meant direct vision, or audition of the divine voice (*Pratibhā*). But gradually such inspiration came to be denied and *Śruti* came to mean exclusively the recorded word of the Vedic literature to be interpreted strictly according to the rule of the *mīmāmsa* and orthodox tradition. Authority came to rule once for all, and spontaneity of experience or realisation, once prized so highly were ruled out. We had occasion to refer to this before.

The indirect effect is to be seen in the influence which Gnostic teachings had on the early Fathers of the Church, like Clement of Alexandria, and his pupil Origen. Clement's philosophy is quite eclectic and includes Stoic as well as Gnostic elements. He equates the term Gnosticos with the "perfect Christian." Gnosis itself he defines as the "apprehensive contemplation of God in the Logos", and he holds that the devout mind can enter into the communion with the divine only in the state of ecstasis. He interprets the Gnostic term Pleroma (St. Paul uses this term as well as Gnosis) to mean the synthesis of all the divine powers in the idea of "the Son."

Origen was even a greater thinker, Christian apologetic perhaps had its origin in him, for he was the first to use the term 'apologia' in that context. His originality and boldness seems to have frightened the timid upholders of orthodoxy into declaring him a heretic. Origen held that Logos is the "germinative principle" of the universe, and that a vital assimilative spark of it is to be found in the soul of man also, where it lays hold of suitable matter and shapes it into a habitation fitted for its needs.

Even the later divergences in doctrine which came to be designated the Arian, Nestorian and other heresies have mainly to do with the standing of Christ in relation to Logos. We should be wholly misunderstanding the position if we imagine that these, life and death controversies related only to academic abstractions over which the ancient thinkers amused themselves splitting hairs. On the other hand, these differences had a great deal to do with actual religious experience with bearings on faith and the conduct of life. For our purposes it is enough if we take note of the importance of the Logos concept as the bridge between the human and the divine which partakes of the nature of both and has been variously named the Word, Reason, Spirit and so on. It is not other than inspiration and revelation. No other concept can serve to span the gulf between monism and dualism, between reason and intuition, or for that matter, between East and West.

V

We may close with a brief notice of Plotinus who is undoubtedly the high-water mark of Western philosophy, and yet closest to Eastern (Indian) thought. For some reason, he has not received till recently the attention which is his due. We are not concerned with his philosophy as a whole but only with that aspect of it which directly bears on our topic. Plotinus was a younger contemporary of Origen (205 A.D. to 270) He was the chief exponent of the school of philosophy known as Neoplatonism. Born in Egypt, he settled down in the prime of life at Rome where he had a distinguished following. He claimed to be an interpreter of Plato, and never differed, at least consciously,

from his master. But all the same, there are marked differences of emphasis between them as regards their teachings. Plotinus is distinctly more monistic in his general outlook. While Plato's method follows that of his own master, Socrates, in appealing to the intuitions of the common men for agreement, Plotinus' appeal is always to the purified and regenerate intellect. It was the metaphysical and mystical side of Plato's doctrine which he developed from his own angle as against Plato's own sociological preoccupations. Neoplatonism, as a whole exerted tremendous influence on medieval Christian philosophy, first through Augustine and then through Scotus Erigena (850).

Plotinus enjoined purification by self-discipline with a view to ascent to the Nous, which Stephen Mackenna translates as the Intellectual Principle. Enthusiasm and Ecstasis count for a great deal in his scheme. For Plotinus, there is a gradation in knowledge: first the senses, then the discursive reason or understanding, and finally spiritual perception or intuitive knowledge, the highest faculty of our nature, "a power which all possess but few use." Plotinus' explanation of the universe is based on a similar hierarchical ascent from the body (matter) to soul, from the soul to Nous and from Nous to the One (God). Living Reality is the world it contemplated by Nous, but then Nous and the world it contemplates (Cosmos Noetos) are comprised in each other. The unity in duality of Nous and Noeta is the necessary condition of there being a world at all. Plotinus speaks of Nous as the "One-Many." Thought has to be transcended in this vision of the One-Many as preliminary to union with the Divine "where the perceiver is one with the perceived." This state is called Enosis. It is recorded that when Plotinus was dying, he entered into the state of ecstatic trance, saying to his friends: "Now seek I to lead back the self within me to the All-self" (*Yogenānte tanu tyajām*).

The striking resemblance of all this to Indian thought is at once obvious. Without much dislocation, we could easily substitute *Samadhi...*" for "Enosis", and *Prajnā* or *Pratibhā* for "Nous" in the writings of Plotinus. The trend of Plotinus

thought seems to oscilate between his own monistic inclinations and Plato's dualism. In Indian terminology, it may well be described as qualified monism (*Viṣiśtādvaita*), with strong *Śakti* affinities, for he ascribes the origin of all life and all thought to a mysterious Divine Energy (Dunamis) of which nothing specific can be predicated.

Apart from specific doctrine, some important implications of Plotinus' thought remain to be examined. Much is sought to be made of his asceticism, *e.g.* his statement that he was ashamed of being in the body. But careful examination will show that his asceticism was only incidental and not extreme. His distinction is that he has given the completest presentation of the loftiest aspect of Greek aestheticism, of art considered as a spiritual activity. His great Discourse on Beauty does not make any difference between the experience of physical beauty and spiritual beauty. He places Beauty on the same plane as Goodness and Truth, but gives it priority, and considers it the most fundamental of the three. His idea of virtue as a natural concordance among the phenomena of the soul, and vice as a discord is characteristic and is in marked contrast with what may be called dualistic notions of morality. He compares spiritual effort and discipline with the work of the artist or sculptor. Havelock Ellis rightly calls him the founder of aesthetics in the philosophic sense.

More specifically, Plotinus places aesthetics on the same plane as mysticism, for according to him the essence of both is contemplation. In this matter, it may be said that he is Neo-Aristotelian rather than Neo-platonist, for Aristotle [66]put the claim of the Contemplative life even higher than Plato. Plotinus represents contemplation as the great function of Nature herself, content, in a sort of self-conciousness, to do nothing more than perfect the bright and fair vision. Plotinus insisted that Contemplation is an active quality, so that all human creative energy may be regarded as the by-play of contemplation, which is the sublimest and most nearly divine of human aptitudes.

We thus see that in Plotinus the opposition which we noticed in Plato between the aesthetic and the spiritual is toned

[66] Ethics, Bk. X, Ch. 6.

down and a reconciliation attempted. We need only refer here to the remarkable agreement between the views of Plotinus regarding the scope and function of Nous, and of *Pratibhā* or *Prajña* in Indian thought. Plotinus is our trump card which we have played last, but it is hoped that we have been able to see a certain continuity of that in Western thought generally on both sides of the commencement of the Christian Era which resulted in the evolution of the Logos-Nous conception as a result of the blend of Greek and Jewish traditions. After Plotinus it was merged in Christian philosophy and theology.

In order to show that we have not ascribed undue importance to Plotinus merely on account of his agreement with Indian thought, a few authoritative dicta may be cited. Vacherot calls the *Enneads* of Plotinus, "the vastest, richest and perhaps the most powerful synthesis in the whole history of philosophy." A. W. Benn says "No other thinker has even accomplished a revolution so immediate, so comprehensive and of such prolonged duration." Drews calls him "the greatest metaphysician of antiquity." Rudolf Eucken said, "He thought a pagan has influenced Christian theology more than any other thinker,' Troeltsch, perhaps the deepest theologian of modern Germany looked forward to a synthesis of Neo-platonism and Christianity as the only possible solution of present day (European) problems. Lastly we may refer to Dean Inge's enthusiastic study in his Gifford Lectures, where he declares that the saying of Eunapius that "The fire still burns on the altars of Plotinus" holds good even to day. I may add that the study of Plotinus will improve our understanding of and appreciation of Indian thought, by offering a new and luminous perspective.

I should also like to add that the antinomies of the present time have first to be solved by us inwardly, therefore we can expect any reconciliation outside. How can such an inward solution be effected except by having recourse to a conception like the *Pratibhā* of India, or the Logos-Nous of Europe, in which the oppositions are already resolved?

(*Concluded*)

Statement about ownership and other particulars about 'The Quarterly Journal of The Mythic Society'

Place of Publication	The Mythic Society Daly Memorial Hall Cenotaph Road Bangalore–2 (S. India).
Periodicity of its Publication	Quarterly
Printer's Name	Shri D. S. Krishnachar M.SC.
Nationality	Indian
Address	Proprietor, Prabha Printing House No. 22–A, Nagasandra Road Basavanagudi, Bangalore–4 (India).
Publisher's Name	Shri G. Nanjundaiah,
Nationality	Indian
Address	No. 23, Nandydroog Road Jayamahal Extension Bangalore–6 (India).
Editor's Name	Shri G. Nanjundaiah,
Nationality	Indian
Address	No. 23, Nandydroog Road Jayamahal Extension Bangalore–6 (India).
Names and addresses of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than one per cent of the total capital.	The Journal is published by the Mythic Society, which is a registered Society under Act III of 1904 and is a non-profit earning institution.

I, G. Nanjundaiah, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

BANGALORE CITY
March 28, 1964

G. NANJUNDAIAH
Editor & Publisher
Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society

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(Founded in 1909)

(*Registered under Act III of 1904*)

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Daly Memorial Hall, Cenotaph Road
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